Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3323
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SUBJECT: GNA FEDERAL ELECTIONS JUNE 17TH

REF: (A) CURACAO A-10 (B) STATE 087210

SUMMARY. THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OF THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES IS LIKELY TO REMAIN IN RELATIVELY CONSERVATIVE HANDS FOLLOWING QUADRENNIAL STATEN ELECTIONS FRIDAY, JUNE 17. IN CURACAO, THE UNITED NATIONAL PEOPLES PARTY -- NVP-U --OF PRIMIN JUANCHO EVERTSZ IS GENERALLY EXPECTED TO LOSE ONE, PERHAPS TWO OF THE FIVE SEATS IT HOLDS IN THE TWENTY-TWO MEMBER STATEN, WHILE S.G.M. (BOY) ROZENDAL'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY -- D.P. -- AND WILSON (PAPA) GODETT'S LEFTIST LABELED FRENTE OBRERO DI LIBERACION 30 DI MEI (WORKERS' PARTY OF LIBERATION 30TH OF MAY) ARE BOTH EXPECTED TO PICK UP SEATS. EITHER OR BOTH OF THE LATTER TWO PARTY LEADERS COULD GET A SHOT AT THE TOP SPOT, BUT ALL CONCERNED APPEAR PREPARED TO MOVE HEAVEN AND EARTH TO KEEP THE PRIZE OUT OF GODETT'S HANDS. IF CALLED UPON, ROZENDAL COULD PROBABLY FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT MORE EASILY THAN GODETT. IN ARUBA, BETICO CROES' MOVIMIENTO ELECTORAL DI PUEBLO (PEOPLES CONFIDENTIAL.

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ELECTORAL MOVEMENT) -- MEP IS EXPECTED TO LOSE AT LEAST ONE OF ITS PRESENT FIVE SEATS TO A NEW PARTY CALLED INTO BEING BY FORMER MEP DEPUTY PARTY LEADER WATTY VOS, WHILE RIVAL PARTIDO PATRIOTICO ARUBANO (ARUBAN PATRIOTIC PARTY) -- PPA, NOW A MINORITY FRACTION OF THE GOVERNMENT MAY SEQUEAK BY WITH ITS PRESENT THREE SEATS.

IMPLICATIONS FOR USG ARE MINOR. THE CONSULATE GENERAL IS

ON GOOD TERMS WITH ALL PRESENTLY FORESEEN "POSSIBLES". WE WOULD RATHER NOT RPT NOT SEE GODETT FORMING THE NEXT NETHERLANDS ANTILLES GOVERNMENT BECAUSE OF GENERALLY NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS AND OVERTONES OF POSSIBLE CUBAN ADVANCES IN THE CARIBBEAN, BUT WE FEEL THAT HOLLAND IS WATCHING AND IS FULLY CAPABLE OF DEALING WITH ANY PRESENTLY FORSEEABLE OUTCOME

END SUMMARY.

I WITH ELECTION DAY JUNE 17TH LESS THAN A WEEK AWAY THE POLITICAL SITUATION IS SURPRISING CALM -- ONE MIGHT SAY "RELAXED". PARTICIPANTS IN FRIDAY'S ELECTION ARE:

(A) CURACAO. 1. NVP-U (UNITED NATIONAL PARTY -- GREEN LIST) OF PRIME MINISTER JUANCHO EVERTSZ. MAJORITY FRACTION OF THE PRESENT RULING COALITION. PRESENTLY HOLDS FIVE SEATS IN THE TWENTY-TWO MEMBER STATEN, EXPECTED TO LOSE GROUND, EMERGING WITH PROBABLY THREE BUT POSSIBLY FOUR SEATS NEXT FRIDAY. THE NVP-U COMMANDS THE SUPPORT OF MUCH OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS AND SOME ANTI-FRENTE LABOR VOTERS. EVERTSZ'S RIGHT-OF-CENTER ADMINISTRATION HAS ENJOYED GON ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SUPPORT. AND HAS DONE A FAIR JOB OF RUNNING THE SIX ISLAND FEDERATION. HOWEVER IT IS EXPECTED TO BE HELD RESPONSIBLE BY ITS EXCLUSIVELY CURACAO ELECTORATE FOR DETERIORATING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIO S IN CURACAO, INCLUDING INCREASED UNEMPLOYMENT, DEPARTURE OF NUMEROUS BUSINESS FIRMS, FOLDING OF HOTELS, AND LATELY THE PARTY' ALLEGED "SOFTNESS" ON THE CURACAO OIL TERMINAL TAX ISSUE. EVERTSZ DREW 7,233 VOTES IN THE 1973 ELECTION. (ABOUT 5,000 CONFIDENTIAL

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VOTES ARE REQUIRED TO WIN A STATEN SEAT IN CURACAO).

- 2. NVP-U WILL ALSO SUFFER SERIOUSLY FROM THE DEFECTION OF FORMER SUPPORTER AND FORMER LABOR MINISTER, DRS. RUFUS MCWILLIAM (2,150 VOTES IN 1973) WHO HAS FORMED HIS OWN ALIANZA PARTY. (SEE BELOW). MCWILLIAM'S EFFORT IS EXPECTED TO BE A SPOILING ACTION, DRAWING OFF SOME NVP-U SUPPORTERS, BUT PROBABLY NOT SUFFICIENT TO WIN A SEAT IN HIS OWN RIGHT.
- 3. NUMBER TWO ON THE TICKET IS LUCINA DA COSTA GOMEZ, WIDOW OF THE PARTY'S LATE CO-FOUNDER, MOISES. SHE IS PRESENTLY MINISTER OF HEALTH, HAS NO PARTICULAR SKILLS, IS THOUGHT TO BE BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SOME PARTY-DAMAGING IN-FIGHTING, YET APPARENTLY HAS INHERITED A CONSIDERABLE LOYAL FOLLOWING (5,308 VOTES IN 1973) FROM HER LATE HUSBAND.
- 4. FRENTE OBRERO (WORKERS' FRONT -- ORANGE LIST). 1. A
 MINORITY FRACTION OF THE PRESENT RULING PARTY -- LEFTIST
 ORIENTED PARTY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTER WILSON

(PAPA) GODETT HAS THREE STATEN SEATS AT PRESENT AND IS EXPECTED (OR FEARED, AS THE CASE MAY BE) TO BE IN LINE FOR ONE, POSSIBLY TWO ADDITIONAL SEATS. GODETT, WHO HAS RETAINED HIS UNION TIES (DOCK WORKERS) THROUGHOUT HIS SERVICE AS LABOR MINISTER, MAY HAVE ADDED TO HIS PERSONAL FOLLOWING BY HIS NOISY CHAMPIONING OF A LAW FORBIDDING ALL LAYOFFS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR SIX MONTHS TO ONE YEAR. HE OCCASIONALLY AFFECTS A CASTRO KHAKI TYPE CAMPAIGN UNIFORM, COMPLETE WITH LONG-BILLED CAP. HE PROFESSES TO BE ANTI-CAPITALIST AND ANTI-IMPERIALIST, BUT "FOR THE WORKERS". HE STOPS SHORT OF CLAIMING TO BE COMMUNIST OR PRO-COMMUNIST (AND IS INDEED NOT UP TO THE INTELLECTUAL PRESSURE OF BEING ONE) HOWEVER, THROUGH NAIVETE AND/OR GREED, HE MIGHT BE SUBJECT TO MANIPULATION BY MORE INTELLECTUAL ASSOCIATES.

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LOCAL BUSINESSMEN HAVE REPORTEDLY FOUND HIM TO BE AVAILABLE IN MOST MATTERS FOR A PRICE. "PAPA" MAY EMERGE AS A "FORMATEUR" CANDIDATE, BUT WOULD PROBABLY BE UNABLE TO FORM A GOVERNMENT. THE REAL INTELLECT IN FRENTE OBRERO IS DON MARTINA (REF A) AN INTELLIGENT, TOUGH, SOMEWHAT EMBITTERED INDIVIDUAL, WHO RECEIVED SOME TRAINING IN THE U.S. AND SOME IN TRINIDAD. HE IS DEFINITELY NOT FOR SALE BUT MAY NOT HAVE A COMPLETELY CLOSED MIND. MARTINA DREW 3,566 VOTES IN THE 1973 ELECTION, IS THOUGHT TO HAVE INCREASED HIS POPULARITY RECENTLY THROUGH HIS STRONG

STAND ON THE CURACAO OIL TERMINAL TAX ISSUE. A POSSIBLE LEADER-SHIP STRUGGLE MIGHT DEVELOP SHOULD HE MAKE A SUBSTANTIAL "GAIN" ON GODETT.

- 5. NUMBER THREE ON THE FRENTE LIST IS R.A. (TKOLINCHI) PIETERSZ PARTY "BAG MAN" PAR EXCELLENCE ("THIS IS FOR THE PARTY--NOW WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO GIVE TOLINCHI?)", VENAL, OPPORTUNISTIC, CORRUPT, BUT LIKEABLE.
- 6. FRENTE'S ACE-IN-THE-HOLE MAY WELL BE NUMBER SIX ON THE LIST: RICARDO ELHAGE, FORMER MEMBER OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND LATER OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST PARTY. ELHAGE DREW 5,083 VOTES CONFIDENTIAL

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IN 1973 FROM AMONG HIS "ARABEE" CONSTITUTENCY (LEBANESE,

ARAB-ORIENTED BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL MEN). THE BIG QUESTION-MARK IN THIS CAMPAIGN IS WHETHER HE CAN DRAW THIS PARTICULAR NORMALLY CONSERVATIVE CONSTITUENCY INTO ANTI-CAPITALIST FRENTE CAMP. THE BETTING IS "NO". ELHAGE IS CONSIDERED TO BE A WEAK CHARACTER, ALWAYS BROKE AND "ON THE TAKE".

7. THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY - RED LIST - D.P. LED BY S.G.M. "BOY" ROZENDAL (5,988 VOTES IN 1973) IS EXPECTED TO MAKE A RELATIVELY IMPRESSIVE "COME-BACK" IN 1977, FROM ONE SEAT TO FOUR, POSSIBLY FIVE. THE PARTY ORIGINALLY WON FOUR SEATS IN 1973. HOWEVER, ELHAGE, EFRAIM CIJNTJE, AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER R. ISA (UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE LAST NAMED) DESERTED THE PARTY SHORTLY AFTER THE ELECTION, HOLDING ONTO THEIR STATEN SEATS, AND CONSTITUTED THEMSELVES A NEW THREE-MAN PARTIDO SOCIAL DEMOCRATICO -- PSD -- FACTION IN THE STATEN. ISA, HOWEVER, HAS NOW ABANDONED POLITICS FOR HIS LUCRATIVE LAW AND NOTARIAL PRACTICE: CIJNTJE IS HEADING THE WEAK PSD LIST; AND ELHAGE, AS MENTIONED ABOVE, HAS JOINED FRENTE. THE D.P. VOTES ARE THEREFORE EXPECTED TO "GO HOME" TO ROZENDAL'S PARTY. ROZENDAL FORMERLY NA MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY TO THE HAGUE, DESPITE HIS IMPRESSIVE SHOWING IN 1973, APPEARS TO BE A SOMEWHAT COLORLESS LEADER, HAVING INHERITED THE LEADERSHIP WHEN ISA WALKED OUT OF THE PARTY. THE PARTY'S LIST IS CONSIDERED BY MANY AS NOT VERY "FRESH", POSSIBLY OWING TO ROZENDAL'S SOMEWHAT COLLEGIAL LEADERSHIP. HOWEVER CAMPAIGNING HAS BEEN ACTIVE AND GOOD VOTER SUPPORT IS EXPECTED. IN A "POPULARITY POLL" CONDUCTED BY THE AVVP, THE NATIONAL TRADE UNION CENTER LAST WEEK, THE D.P. DREW 1,000 PLUS VOTES TO 700 FOR FRENTE, 300 FOR NVP-U, AND 200 FOR ALIANZA.

8. A.N. DIAZ, EDITOR OF THE PARTY NEWSPAPER LA PRENSA AND JEANNETTE L. CRATZ OF THE DUTCH LANGUAGE BEURS EN NIEUWS BERICHTEN, (RECENT U.S. EXCHANGE VISITOR), REPRESENT THE FOURTH ESTATE ON THE D.P. LIST. FORMER STATEN MEMBER, S.N. (STAN) CONFIDENTIAL

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ROGERS, LONG TIME CIVIL SERVANT, THOUGHT TO BE A DRAWING CARD FOR VOTERS FROM THE WINDWARD ISLANDS AND OF BRITISH WEST INDIES EXTRACTION, IS NUMBER SEVEN.

9. ALIANZA (ALLIANCE -- YELLOW LIST) -- PARTY OF RUFUS MC-WILLIAM, FORMER NVP-U LABOR MINISTER MENTIONED ABOVE, IS GIVEN ONLY AN OUTSIDE CHANCE TO WIN A SEAT -- AT NVP-U'S EXPENSE.

10. (PARTIDO SOCIAL DEMOCRATICO -- WHITE LIST L PSD. THE REMNANTS OF THIS BREAK-AWAY GROUP, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF EFRAIM CIJNTJE, WHO WAS ELECTED TO THE STATEN IN 1973 ON THE D.P. TICKET, ARE NOT EXPECTED TO WIN A SEAT.

11. COMMENT: (SPECULATIVE) 1. PRIME MINISTER EVERTSZ (NVP-U) FACING AN UPHILL FIGHT TO HOLD HIS PARTY'S LOSSES TO ONLY ONE SEAT, HAS TOLD FRIENDS THAT HE REGARDS HIS MAIN OPPONENT GODETT AS HIGHLY VULNERABLE ON THE COMMUNIST ISSUE. HE THEREFORE ATTEMPTED THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES TO OBTAIN FROM THE CONSULATE GENERAL ANTI-CASTRO PROPAGANDA FILMS FOR USE ON TV AGAINST FRENTE. REFER HANSON/PIERCE TELECON MAY 5 AND MAY 16. ALTHOUGH THERE IS PROBABLY MERIT IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S REASONING, USG IS UNABLE TO ASSIST HIM AS REQUESTED (REF B), AND HE HAS, THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES BEEN SO ADVISED. OBSERVERS FEEL THAT IF THE NVP-U MANAGES TO HOLD ONTO A MINIMUM OF FOUR STATEN SEATS, THE ODDS WILL BE GOOD THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL THEN BE ABLE TO "MAKE A DEAL" WITH THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY (OR EVEN FRENTE) PLUS THE "GO-WITH-THE-WINNER" WINDWARD ISLANDS AND BONAIRE PARTIES TO FORM THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

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- 12. IF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY WINS AS MANY AS FIVE SEATS, EVERTSZ WOULD BE OUT AS A PRIME MINISTER POSSIBILITY. HOWEVER D.P. LEADER ROZENDAL, THE AUTOMATIC CHOICE FOR "FORMATEUR" COULD PROBABLY COUNT ON NVP-U PLUS SUFFICIENT SUPPORT FROM THE OTHER ISLANDS. ON THE OTHER HAND IF FRENTE EMERGES WITH FIVE SEATS, "PAPA" MAY GET HIS CHANCE. AS OF THIS READING,, HOWEVER, THE ONLY PARTY WHICH WOULD CONSIDER JOINING WITH FRENTE IS THE ARUBAN MEP OF BETICO CROES, WHICH ITSELF IS EXPECTED NOT TO WIN MORE THAN FOUR STATEN SEATS. NINE SEATS FROM THE TWO LARGE ISLANDS WOULD NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, END COMMENT.
- (B) ARUBA. 1. G.F. (BETICO) CROES' MOVIMIENTO ELECTORAL DI DI PUEBLO (MEP) IS EXPECTED TO LOSE AT LEAST ONE SEAT, OWING TO THE DEFECTION OF LONG TIME DEPUTY PARTY LEADER AND FORMER JUSTICE MINISTER WATTY VOS, IS A ONE ISSUE PARTY: -- INDEPENDENCE OR AT LEAST SEPARATE STATUS (STATUS APARTE) FOR ARUBA. AS HAS BEEN REPORTED, NO INDEPENDENCE IS IN THE CARDS FOR ARUBA OR ANYONE ELSE IN THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES FOR SEVERAL YEARS, AND CROES APPEARS SATISFIED TO HAVE WON HIS PHONEY REFERENDUM MARCH 25, AND HE HAS NOT BEEN HEARD FROM ON INDEPENDENCE SINCE THAT TIME. BESIDES BEING A ONE-ISSUE PARTY, MEP HAS, SINCE THE WITHDRAWAL/CONFIDENTIAL

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EXPULSION OF VOS, BECOME MORE AND MORE A ONE-MAN PARTY.

- 2. PARTIDO PATRIOTICO ARUBANO -- PPA, FORMERLY HEADED BY VICE PRIME MINISTER LEO CHANCE, WHO STEPPED DOWN IN APRIL OVER INTRA-PARTY DIFFERENCES, POLLED 34.8 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN 1973 AND BECAME A MINORITY FRACTION OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN JANUARY 1976 WHEN NVP-U BROKE WITH MEP. PPA WAS EARLIER CAUGHT UP IN INTERNAL PROBLEMS, BUT THESE WERE PARTIALLY ALLEVIATED WHEN MINISTER CHANCE STEPPED DOWN. THE PARTY DOES HAVE A SMALL CONTINUING PROBLEM, HOWEVER, IN THE FORM OF ONE SELWYN SPANNER, THOUGHT TO HAVE A FOLLOWING OF SEVERAL HUNDRED VOTERS, WHO WALKED OUT OF THE PARTY IN LATE APRIL TO FORM A ONE-MAN TICKET.
- 3. RUBA (REFORMISTAN UNI PA BIENESTAR DI ARUBA -- UNITED REFORMISTS FOR THE WELFARE OF ARUBA) ARUBA'S NEWEST PARTY WAS FORMED BY FORMER MEP DEPUTY LEADER, WATTY VOS, WHEN THE LATTER BROKE WITH BETICO CROES, AND WAS QUICKLY JOINED BY ANOTHER SPLINTER PARTY, THE AVP (ARUBANSE VOLKS PARTEI ARUBAN PEOPLES PARTY) HEADED BY RUDY FRANK, NOW NUMBER TWO ON RUBA'S LIST. SINCE VOS, FRANK AND ANOTHER MEP DROPOUT, RALPH RICHARDSON, POLLED A TOTAL OF OVER THREE THOUSAND PERSONAL VOTES IN 1973 THE PARTY SEEMS ASSURED OF AT LEAST ONE SEAT, AT MEP'S EXPENSE.

- 4. COMMENT; (SPECULATIVE) THE OUTCOME IN ARUBA IS LIKELY TO BE: MEP FOUR, PPA TWO OR THREE, RUBA ONE OR TWO, WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF A ONE SEAT SHIFT BETWEEN PPA AND RUBA. EITHER OR BOTH OF THE MINORITY PARTIES WOULD PROBABLY CONSENT TO JOIN D.P. OR NVP-U AS THE CASE MAY BE, IN FORMING A GOVERNMENT. ON THE OTHER HAND IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT EITHER PARTY WOULD JOIN WITH FRENTE. END COMMENT.
- (C) THE WINDWARD ISLANDS. ST. MAARTIN, ST. EUSTATIUS,
 AND SABA HAVE FOR THE PAST TWENTY FIVE YEARS BEEN THE ONE
 PARTY FIEF OF THE VETERAN STATEN MEMBER "SENATOR" CLAUDE WATHEY,
 WHOSE INDEPENDENT EMOCRATIC PARTY IS IN EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF ALL
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THREE ISLANDS. THE ONLY CHANGE EXPECTED THIS YEAR WILL RESULT FROM THE FACT THAT WATHEY AT THE LAST MINUTE DECIDED NOT TO RUN FOR HIS STATEN SEAT, PASSING THE MANTLE TO ISLAND DEPUTY RICHARDSON. OBSERVERS STATE THAT WITH RICHARDSON OFF THE ISLAND ATTENDING STATEN MEETINGS IN CURACAO, WATHEY EXPECTS TO BE ABLE TO SHORE UP HIS PARTY'S ORGANIZATION AND ASSUME TIGHTER LOCAL CONTROL. IN ANY EVENT THE WINDWARD ISLAND STATEN MEMBER TRADITIONALLY VOTES WITH THE PARTY IN POWER.

(D) BONAIRE. HERE TOO THE PROSPECT IS THAT INCUMBENT UNION PROGRESISTA BONAIRENSE -- BONAIRE PROGRESSIVE UNION, WILL BE RETURNED TO POWER, AND THAT ITS SINGLE STATEN SEAT WILL VOTE WITH WHOEVER ORGANIZES THE GOVERNMENT. HANSON

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